

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 /074 W
-----025401 020806Z /11

R 011206Z DEC 77
FM AMCONSUL MUNICH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9471
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: STRAUSS LASHES BACK AT HELMUT SCHMIDT

1. INTRO AND SUMMARY. CSU CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS HAS RESPONDED SHARPLY TO FRG CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT'S RECENT ASSERTION THAT HE IS FED UP WITH STRAUSS TRAVELLING AROUND ABROAD ENGAGING IN THE "FAITH-HEALING" OF DICTATORSHIPS. ALTHOUGH STRAUSS' ATTACK ON SCHMIDT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE ANY APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON STRAUSS' STANDING WITH CSU VOTERS HERE, IT IS LIKELY TO REINFORCE CONVICTION OF THOSE GERMANS WHO PERCEIVE STRAUSS AS AN EXTREME RIGHTIST. END SUMMARY.

2. IN LEAD ARTICLE OF DECEMBER 3 (SIC) ISSUE OF CSU ORGAN "BAYERN KURIER," WHICH IS ENTITLED "WHAT WE ARE FED
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UP WITH, MR. SCHMIDT," STRAUSS CHARACTERIZES SCHMIDT AS A COWBOY "WHO SHOOTS FROM THE HIP . . . BUT PAST THE TARGET." SCHMIDT IS ALSO PORTRAYED AS A PERSON WHO HAS AS MUCH RIGHT TO TEACH THE ART OF POLITICAL STYLE AS A NIGHT CLUB OWNER HAS TO PREACH ABOUT VIRTUE. ARTICLE GOES ON TO ENUMERATE FIVE INSTANCES IN PAST TWO DECADES IN WHICH SCHMIDT ALLEGEDLY "SHOT FROM THE HIP."

3. STRAUSS CONTRASTS HIS OWN PUBLIC CALL FOR THE REESTABLISHMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND FULL RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE WITH THE ALLEGED FAILURE OF SPD "PILGRIMS TO EASTERN COUNTRIES" TO EXPOUND THESE SAME PRINCIPLES THERE.

4. STRAUSS TAKES PARTICULAR EXCEPTION TO SCHMIDT'S REACTION TO CRITICISM OF HIS SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT. STRAUSS CHARACTERIZES SCHMIDT'S REACTION AS A MIXTURE OF DISGUSTING ARROGANCE, THE STYLE OF A HIGH-RANKING HITLER YOUTH LEADER AND MILITARY AFFECTATIONS. STRAUSS LABELS THIS TYPE OF THINKING ON THE PART OF SCHMIDT AS AUTHORITARIAN, OVERBEARING AND CHARACTERIZED BY A SHOCKING LACK OF DEMOCRATIC SUBSTANCE.

5. ARTICLE WINDS UP WITH ASSERTION THAT IT IS TOO BAD FOR SCHMIDT THAT HE HAS MISSED HIS HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY AND, DESPITE OCCASIONAL ATTEMPTS TO ACT TO CONTRARY, HAS MADE HIS ABLE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MARXIST REVOLUTIONARIES.

6. COMMENT. STRAUSS' ARTICLE CONTAINS BY FAR THE HARSHTEST RHETORIC HE HAS DIRECTED AT HELMUT SCHMIDT IN RECENT YEARS. IN PAST, STRAUSS HAS TREATED SCHMIDT WITH FAR MORE RESTRAINT THAN HE HAS OTHER SPD LEADERS LIKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILLY BRANDT AND EGON BAHR.

7. ALTHOUGH THE KIND OF RHETORIC STRAUSS HAS USED THIS ARTICLE IS LIKELY TO REINFORCE THE CONVICTION OF THOSE GERMANS WHO FEEL STRAUSS IS AN EXTREME RIGHTIST WHO HAS NO BRAKES, IT IS UNLIKELY TO EFFECT STRAUSS' STANDING WITH CSU VOTERS IN BAVARIA. GILMORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MUNICH03815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770447-0164
Format: TEL
From: MUNICH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712105/aaaadlcx.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fff4cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 113094
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STRAUSS LASHES BACK AT HELMUT SCHMIDT
TAGS: PINT, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fff4cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009